

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

July 17, 2008



RZ 08-17: City of Bryan

CASE DESCRIPTION: a City-initiated request to change the zoning classification from a combination of Retail District (C-2), Commercial District (C-3) and Residential District – 5000 (RD-5) to Downtown North District (DT-N)

LOCATION: about 20 acres of land bounded by West 18th Street, North Simms and Bryan Avenues and West 23rd Street in downtown Bryan, Brazos County, Texas

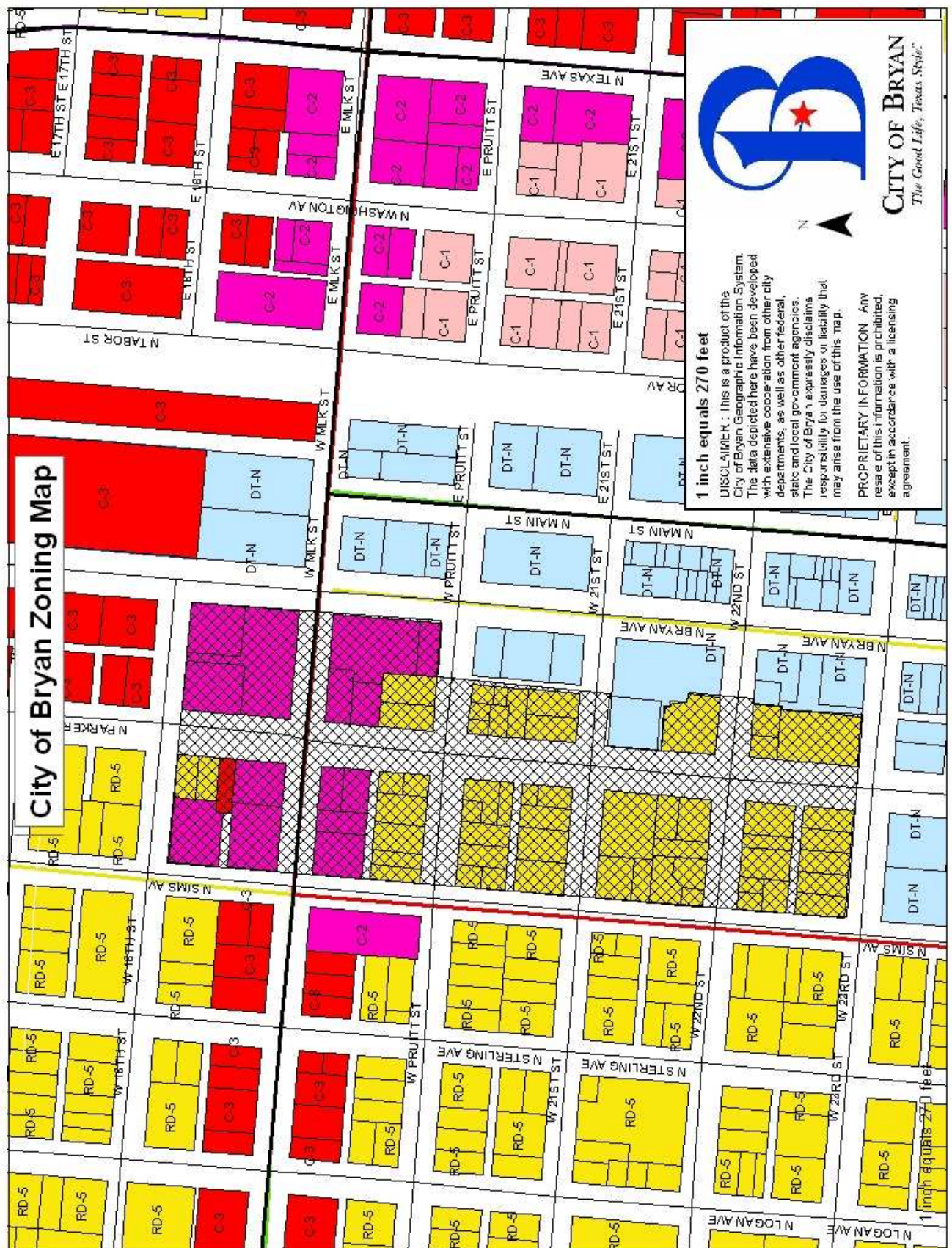
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: all lots in Blocks 122 thru 126 and 143 thru 147 of the Bryan Original Townsite

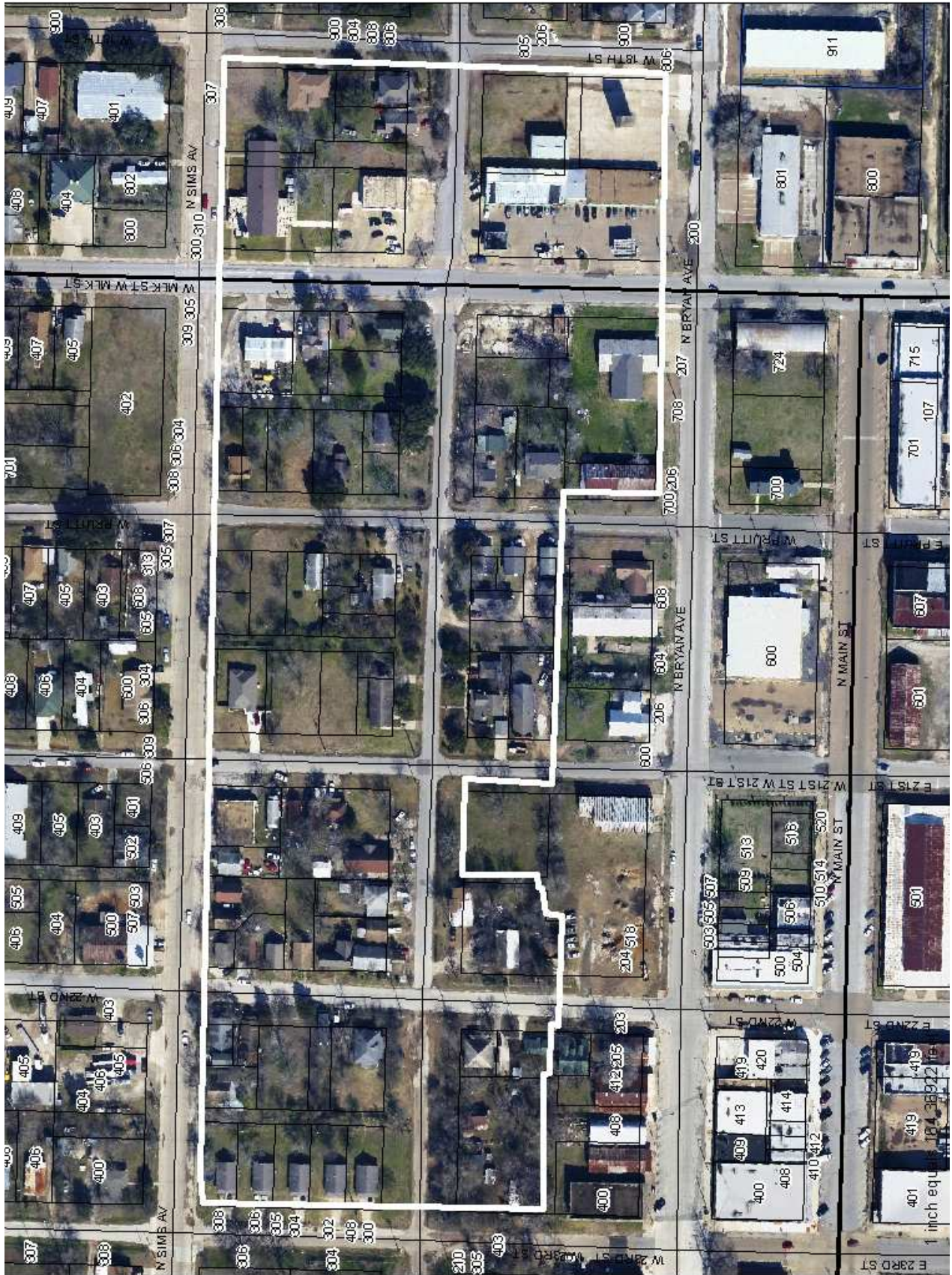
EXISTING LAND USE: mixed-use, mainly residences and vacant lots

APPLICANT(S): City of Bryan

STAFF CONTACT: Julie Fulgham, Project Planner

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends **approving** DT-N zoning for these ten city blocks.





BACKGROUND:

The City of Bryan occasionally reviews and updates the official zoning map to foster proper development and to properly manage land use within the City of Bryan. Planning Services staff is proposing a comprehensive rezoning approach in an 8 ½ block area of northern downtown Bryan, to foster a mixed-use environment. Mixed-use environments help promote neighborhood pride because typical residents can work, live, and shop in one area. Staff chose this area to expand the DT-N zoning district because it has the most opportunities for infill than other areas surrounding downtown. Currently properties on Main Street and Bryan Avenue are in high demand. Expanding the DT-N zoning district will provide more economically feasible alternatives to local businesses wishing to be located in a mixed-use environment. Approximately 50 property owners were notified of this rezoning case by both a letter and the traditional postcard notification.

RELATION TO BRYAN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

The City of Bryan adopted the Comprehensive Plan Update in 2007. The plan is the framework for the establishment of zoning and other regulatory tools. The current plan includes policies and recommendations related to the various physical aspects of the community. These aspects are supported by a set of goals and objectives.

The Planning and Zoning Commission shall consider the following policy statements when making its recommendation regarding this proposed zoning change:

- **Sustainable Mix of Land Uses** – There was a repeatedly stated desire to identify and locate suitable land for future residential and commercial uses. This was sought to house the growing population and provide opportunities for the commercial uses needed to serve them. As sales and ad valorem taxes are critical to the fiscal health of Bryan, it was requested that appropriate changes to the zoning map be recommended once appropriate land use locations are identified.
- **Redevelopment** – A number of older commercial areas along major corridors contain vacant or underutilized buildings. The best local examples of redevelopment are Downtown Bryan and the Tejas Center at the corner of Texas Avenue and Villa Maria. The adaptive reuse of buildings and redevelopment of existing commercial structures supplements the tax base and beautifies the area. Residents sought to translate Bryan's success in Downtown and with the Tejas Center for other areas in need of redevelopment. Because of the number of areas in need of redevelopment, this effort was viewed by most as a top priority for Bryan.
- **Infill** – Bryan has a large inventory of parcels that were bypassed by development and remain undeveloped to this day. Since these parcels almost always have access to existing utilities, their development saves the cost of extending water and sewer service. Building within the urban core also lessens the number of vehicle trips that burden our thoroughfares. Infill was also seen as a way to revitalize older residential areas and was a topic of discussion at several public input venues.
- **Mixed-Use Development** – Many comments were made in regard to the growing acceptance of mixed-use development. Because of the growing cost of transportation and land and the general aging of the population, it was proposed that residential and scalable commercial uses, built within the same development or in close proximity, would serve a growing segment of the population. It was agreed that there are many opportunities for mixed-use development in Bryan.

Furthermore, the Goals stated within the Comprehensive Plan regulate that the City of Bryan leaders shall foster the redevelopment of older and or blighted areas by:

1. Continuing to facilitate the redevelopment of Downtown Bryan;
2. Formulate broad and area-focused redevelopment initiatives

ANALYSIS:

In making its recommendation regarding a proposed zoning change, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall consider the following factors.

1. Whether the uses permitted by the proposed change will be appropriate in the immediate area concerned and their relationship to general area and the City as a whole.

The DT-N zoning classification is primarily intended to accommodate existing developments and to promote new development in an area which provides for various types of residential uses as well as general retail, office, business and service uses. The district encourages high density residential development and retail uses to support a residential community.

The current uses on the subject properties are within the intended uses of the Downtown North District. Approving this rezoning request will foster the redevelopment of this area into a mixed-use neighborhood.

2. Whether there is availability of water, wastewater, storm water, and transportation facilities generally suitable and adequate for the proposed use.

The subject properties are located within the heart of the City. Downtown Bryan was created using a grid system. Grid systems are the most effective way to disperse public infrastructure to nearby properties and to funnel traffic to other areas within the City. Any issues regarding capacity will be addressed at the time of development.

3. The amount of vacant land currently classified for similar development in the vicinity and elsewhere in the City, and any special circumstances which may make a substantial part of such vacant land unavailable for development.

There is currently little land zoned Downtown North within this area. Staff hopes this request will spur redevelopment in this northern area of Downtown Bryan from Texas Avenue towards the east and Sims Avenue towards the west of these properties. This rezoning is the first step to capture the redevelopment synergy of downtown Bryan beyond Main Street and Bryan Avenue.

4. The recent rate at which land is being developed in the same zoning classification as the request, particularly in the vicinity of the proposed change.

Staff contends that all downtown properties are developing at a rapid pace.

5. How other areas designated for similar development will be, or are unlikely to be, affected if the proposed amendment is approved, and whether such designation for other areas should be modified also.

If the proposed zoning change were approved, staff believes there to be few if any effects on other areas designated for similar developments.

6. Any other factors which will substantially affect the health, safety, morals, or general welfare.

Staff does not believe this proposed development would adversely affect health, safety, morals, or general welfare. Mixed-use development on the subject properties are likely to have minimal direct detrimental impacts on the appearance, comfort and value of existing nearby single-family residences.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends **approving** DT-N zoning on all properties included within this request.